**Descriptions of GPS and the Cs of PYD**

**(G) Goal Selection**

*Before an adolescent can achieve a goal, he or she must choose that goal and understand the steps needed for goal achievement. In the GPS framework, these behaviors are called “Goal Selection” (or G) behaviors.*

**Choosing Your Destination** – This behavior isthe ability for a youth to select one or a small number of meaningful, realistic and demanding long-term goals, for example, getting into college or joining an athletic team.

**Goals That Help Others / Community –** Long-term goals, goals that are the destination of youth, should help themselves and also help the community, whether it be family, school, neighborhood, or the environment.

**Breaking Down Long Term Goals (Vertical Coherence)** – Thriving adolescents are able to select long-term goals that can be broken into short-term steps along the way. Having logical and achievable short-term goals within a long-term goal improves the likelihood of attaining that goal.

**Identifying Relations Among Goals (Horizontal Coherence) –** The best kinds of goals help youth out in many different parts of life, and can even help youth to achieve other goals. For example, the goal of joining a sports team helps youth become both physically fit and make friends.

**(P) Pursuit of Strategies**

*After selecting a goal, an adolescent must then use and/or develop the strategies needed to achieve that goal. In the GPS framework, these behaviors are called “Pursuit of Strategies”, (or P) behaviors.*

**Sticking to a Plan –** Making a detailed, step-by-step plan – and sticking to it by staying focused – increases the likelihood that an individual will successfully achieve a goal.

**Seizing the Moment –** In order to achieve their goals, youth often have to know when and how to act. To seize the moment, youth must be aware of their environment, and know when and how to use their strategies most appropriately. For example, a youth may wait to ask his parents for help when they are in a good mood.

**Developing Strategies –** In order to achieve their goals, youth must develop strategies that will help them along the way. Sometimes, these may be strategies they already posses, such as studying to prepare for a test. Other times, it might mean looking for new strategies in the environment such as joining a study group to prepare for a test. It might also mean that youth refine, or practice, the strategies that they are already using.

**Showing Persistent Effort –** Just having the right strategies in place isn’t enough for a youth to achieve his or her goals. They must stay focused and show persistent effort with their strategies, resisting the temptation (at least most of the time) to be distracted by other things that may lead them off the path to goal achievement.

**Checking Your Progress –** An important – and often-overlooked – strategy for achieving goals is keeping track of goal progress, and specifically, which strategies are working and which are not. Some youth may do this primarily mentally, keeping track “in their head” about how things are going and what is working and what isn’t. Other youth might need more structure to check up on their progress.

**(S) Shifting Gears**

*Sometimes the strategies that we use don’t work as well we planned. However, “roadblocks” don’t necessarily mean that the goal is wrong; rather, there might be something not working with our strategies. In other words, with some adjustments, there is still hope to achieve the goal. In the GPS model, these are called “Shifting Gears” (or S) behaviors.*

**Substituting Strategies –** Sometimes, a youth’s first choice of strategies won’t work quite as well as they had planned for a particular goal. Keeping that long-term goal a reality requires some adjustment or substitution of strategies. Youth might have to change their plans, but the goal remains the same.

**Seeking Different Help –** When youth run into trouble or their original plans do not work out, they often need to seek help from new and familiar people and resources to reach their goals.

**Emulating the Strategies of Others –** One of the most important ways that youth can find new strategies is by modeling or emulating the successful behavior of others. Society is full of success stories, and often these individuals provide excellent advice for youth who are struggling to achieve their goals.

**Changing Goals Without Feeling Bad, or Loss-Based Selection (LBS) –** LBS is all about changing ***goals*** when things aren’t working as planned. Recognizing the need to move to a new, more appropriate goal, LBS is about accepting loss as part of the learning process, analyzing options and keeping an overall long-term goal in perspective.

**What is PYD?**

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is the capacity for all young people to Thrive. Whether it is through their own actions and abilities, or through the support of caring adults and youth-serving organizations, ALL young people can lead healthy, happy lives. Studies from Tufts University and other research centers show that PYD is made up of Five Cs that are linked to youths’ positive development: Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring. When youth are developing positively and reach the highest level of the Five Cs, they are more likely to become active citizens and develop a sense of Contribution, a sixth C.

**Competence**

*Competence is defined as a young person’s ability to perform successfully in a number of different areas, such as social, academic, cognitive, and self-care skills.*

**Academic Competence** – Youth’s ability to develop academic skills, participates in school activities, and uses personal and academic resources for success in school.

**Cognitive Competence** – Youth’s ability to display curiosity and initiative to learn outside of school settings, which leads to skills in these areas.

**Social Competence** – Youth’s ability to interact successfully in different situations with people of various ages and cultures.

**Emotional Competence –** Youth’s ability to identify, control and adapt emotions in different situations.

**Healthy Habits** – Youth’s ability to make healthy life choices by taking care of self with good diet, rest, and exercise, while avoiding unsafe behaviors.

**Confidence**

*Confidence is defined as a young person’s beliefs in his or her abilities to achieve in a variety of domains.*

**Overall Confidence –** Youth’s internal sense of overall positive self-worth and efficacy.

**Confidence in School** – Youth’s confidence in ability to succeed in an academic setting.

**Confidence in Physical Appearance** – Youth’s confidence in dress, hygiene, and features.

**Confidence in Peer Acceptance** – Youth’s confidence in ability to make and keep friendships.

**Confidence in an Area of Interest** – Youth’s personal belief for success in a valued area.

**Caring**

*Caring is defined by the sense of sympathy and empathy that a young person has for others, as well as a dedication to social justice. A caring young person is not satisfied with just having his or her own needs met, but is also concerned with the needs of others. Caring includes the expectation that everyone should have equal opportunities and be free from discrimination.*

**Sympathy** – Youth’s support and concern for the emotions of others.

**Empathy** – Youth’s ability to relate to others’ emotions and experiences, and ability to place one’s self “in the other person’s shoes.”

**Caring Actions** – How kind and helpful youth’s behaviors are towards other people.

**Promoting Social Justice** – Youth’s willingness to help a community in need by working for fairness and equality.

**Connection**

*Connection is measured by the quality of relationships that a young person has with other people and social groups.*

**Connection with Family** – How well youth maintains healthy relationships with family members, uses open communication skills, and deals with problems.

**Connection with Friends** – How well youth maintains strong, healthy relationships with friends and is able to connect with many peers.

**Connection with Community** – How well youth creates successful relationships with community members and institutions, and is able to improve and expand these ties.

**Character**

*Character is defined as having a sense of morality – beliefs in standards for the behavior of oneself and others – and the belief that integrity is an important part of a thriving life. Character can also be described as doing what’s best for yourself and society.*

**Moral Compass** – Youth’s sense of right and wrong that guides them in situations and whether youth uses moral emotions (empathy, sympathy, admiration, shame, guilt, anger, self-esteem) rather than snap judgments to make decisions.

**Integrity** – Youth’s ability to show sense of right and wrong in actions and ability to monitor self to see if actions are consistent with beliefs.

**Equal Treatment of Others** – Youth’s equal and fair treatment of others, regardless of who the others are and youth’s ability to stand up for the fair treatment of everyone.

**Contribution**

*When the Five Cs are present in a young person, then a sixth C, Contribution, can emerge. Contribution describes a person’s ability and desire to give back and contribute to his family, community, and society.*

**Service to Community** – Youth’s level of service to the community, such as getting involved in service projects.

**Leadership Roles** – Youth’s ability and initiative to lead in a positive way.

**Mentoring Peers** – Youth’s willingness to mentor peers who need help.

**Sense of Positive Purpose** – Youth’s sense of purpose and desire to contribute now and in the future.